

ership, though, the proper climate must exist in the unit. The staff officers and NCOs must feel that the chain of command supports them. Certain areas, of course, must be left to those with command authority, but a well directed staff will know what these areas are and will not make any effort to interfere with them. Within the staff members' own area of expertise, however, any discouragement or stifling of initiative will decrease their capacity for leadership. A command climate that fosters initiative, and recognizes that staff officers and NCOs are also leaders, will benefit from the positive influence of that leadership.

A spirit of teamwork is also vital to the effectiveness of staff leadership. Efforts to affix blame usually overlook the real cause of a problem and, more important, the way to prevent it from happening again. More effort directed toward preventing mistakes and less toward finding fault will make better use of the principles of leadership and will help maintain a

more cohesive climate.

Staff members who uphold the principles of leadership while also managing their own areas therefore need to have their efforts rewarded. Even simple comments from the commander offered to recognize an individual staff member can have an encouraging effect and will go a long way toward fostering the proper command climate for leadership initiative. Reinforced leadership is better, stronger, more effective leadership.

All officers and NCOs in today's Army must have a commitment to leadership regardless of their branches or job titles. Without this commitment, commanders cannot command effectively and staffs cannot function as efficiently in supporting the commanders.

Staff officers and NCOs can improve their leadership skills by studying and applying the 11 principles of leadership and by ensuring that their personal character is strong and steady. Those who will try can better develop the traits described in

the manual. But the formula is not complete without the addition of command support and reinforcement. A proper climate will allow staff leadership initiatives to flourish, and a fair system of encouragement will further strengthen those initiatives.

A staff that is made up of leaders will be able to provide better support to the commander and his soldiers. At the same time, a commander who realizes this and develops his staff members as leaders will benefit from the positive influence of that leadership: The soldiers in his unit will be better served, their families better supported, and their training for war more realistic.

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The Soviet AK74

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article is another in a recurring series prepared from unclassified sources by the Threat Division, Directorate of Intelligence and Security, U.S. Army Infantry Center, at Fort Benning.

The Soviet AK74 is hailed by some Soviet and international sources as the best assault rifle in the world today. It was first introduced in 1974 to selected Soviet forces and first seen in public in the May Day parade in Moscow in 1977.

This weapon is the latest in the Kalashnikov assault rifle series. The original was developed by Mikhail Kalashnikov to capitalize on the strong points of the World War II German MP43 and MP44 rifles. AK assault rifles, in one variant

or another, have been used in every world conflict of the past 25 years. The chain of evolution has included the AK47, the AKM, and now the AK74. The AK74 family includes a light machinegun (RPK74), a folding stock version (AKS74), and a submachinegun (AKSU74).

The AK74 continues the well-known reliability of the AK47. It is extremely effective when fired on automatic because of its muzzle brake compensator (MBC), which is the best in the world today. This MBC limits the characteristic rise of round impact and causes no more recoil than a standard .22 caliber long rifle bullet. The AK74 will deliver a high volume of accurate fire.

The magazine is plastic and twice as heavy as an M16 magazine, but it is rug-

ged and is grooved to accept 15-round stripper clips to facilitate loading.

The effective range of the AK74 is 450 to 500 meters, which is greater than that of either the AK47 or the AKM. This does not mean, though, that the AK74 is a sniper weapon, because the improvements in the system—such as the MBC and the accurate 5.45x39mm round—do not in themselves make better marksmen.

The AK74 does have some weak points:

- Its extremely loud report has hospitalized some Soviet soldiers during range firing.
- Its muzzle flash is three times that of the AK47.
- It can easily be defeated by body armor.
- The safety has not been changed in 40 years; it is still loud to operate and

hard to manipulate.

- Despite its qualitative improvements, the AK74 is a volume-of-fire weapon.
- No windage adjustment is possible below the unit armorer level.
- Firing studies have proved that the battlesight zero of the AK74 can change 1.65 inches between firings without any rough handling.

The AK74 can be identified by its muzzle flash, the characteristic light green color of its tracer round, and its loud report. It can be distinguished from the AKM and the AK47 by its muzzle brake compensator, its relatively straight magazine, and the magazine's burnt orange color.

The accompanying table shows how the AK74 compares with the U.S. M16A2 rifle. Both weapons have strong and weak points, of course. Neither is

STANDARD DATA COMPARISON

	AK74	M16A2
Caliber	5.45x39mm	5.56x45mm
Kinds of Bullets	Ball/tracer/blank	Ball/tracer/blank
Rifle Length	940mm	1,000mm
Practical Rate of Fire	100-150 rounds per minute	90-120 rounds per minute
Muzzle Velocity	900 meters per second	970 meters per second
Magazine Capacity	30 or 40 rounds	20 or 30 rounds
Magazine Weight (loaded)	.6 kilograms	.46 kilograms
Effective Range	450-500 meters	550 meters (point), 800 meters (area)
Loudness	164 decibels	151 decibels
Weight Empty	3.3 kilograms	3.53 kilograms
Weight Full	3.9 kilograms	3.99 kilograms
Basic Load	180-200 rounds	210 rounds in 7 30-round magazines

capable, for example, of penetrating standard construction materials (one layer of concrete blocks), and this means heavier

weapons must be used in urban environments. But overall, they are basically comparable.

Range Operations Checklist

As an aid to planning, coordinating, and conducting range operations, the National Guard Marksmanship Training Unit (NGMTU), Nashville, Tennessee, developed a range operation checklist. The checklist was adapted from an article by Captain Eric E. Holdeman that appeared in the September-October 1979 issue of *INFANTRY* ("Everything You Wanted to Know About Ranges," pages 27-30).

The checklist is reproduced here, reduced in size from standard page-size sheets. The actual pages are plastic covered so that a grease pencil can be used and then rubbed off, and are punched for use in a three-ring binder.

The instructions on the first page (illegible in the reduced version shown here) read as follows:

This checklist consists of eight sections, each covering a different topic relating to range operations.

Before using the checklist on the job, always call higher headquarters safety office to find out if there are any recent

that person each question in order.

Record each "Yes" answer by placing a check in the GO column. Record a "No" or "Don't Know" by checking the NO GO column. Refer now to the checklist to find the GO and NO GO columns.

When you have asked all the questions in a section, advise the person who answered with NO GOs that the problems exist and ask him to correct them. When you have completed the entire checklist, look back over the NO GOs. Contact the people who reported them and ask if they have corrected each problem. If so, change the answer to GO.

If any NO GO remains for any reason, analyze the safety hazard it presents. Then design and implement a countermeasure for the hazard. Afterwards, check that your countermeasures work.

Before range operations start, be sure that you have a workable countermeasure implemented for each hazard presented



changes to the regulations or SOP.

Then report to the person who must answer the questions in each section. Ask